

SOCIAL CONDITIONS IN BRAZIL, AS SEEN BY CLEMENCEAU



This is the thirteenth of a series of articles giving the impressions of South America written by the former Premier of France.

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By Georges Clemenceau.

I HAVE already jotted down a few characteristics that struck me in the people of Brazil, and these will form a sort of prelude to what I am now about to say on the subject. For a traveler who claims to convey only information that he obtained at first-hand the difficulty of course is to make any definite statements when handicapped by the consciousness that his observations were all too hasty and brief to warrant his falling into the common tendency to generalize.

Brazilian society is very different from that of the Argentine, its elements being more distinct and more complex, while equally European in trend, and with the same immutably American base; the strain of French culture is more attenuated, the impulsive temperament more apparent, but for steady perseverance and capacity for hard work the Brazilians cannot be surpassed.

In criticizing the social conditions in Brazil it must be borne in mind that the abolition of slavery dates only to twenty years back. I do not think the slave-owner was systematically cruel, but slavery does not precisely rest on any inducement to kindness. Certain buildings that I came across and the explanation of their use that was given to me showed plainly enough what we already knew—that the blacks were treated like cattle, with just so much consideration as was dictated by self-interest.

Since man is almost as humane as he is cruel, no doubt the masters had their benevolent moments, but the institution was nevertheless fully as demoralizing for owners as owned. The blacks multiplied, however, and if the abolition of slavery was not accompanied here, as in the United States, by acts of violence, the reason is that, to the everlasting honor of the white man, the institution had been universally condemned before emancipation was proclaimed.

It has been said that in Brazil slavery was buried beneath flowers. The fact is it had become practically impossible when its disappearance was publicly and officially acknowledged. And as, happily, there was here no race hatred between whites and blacks these two elements of the population were able to continue to live peacefully side by side in a necessary collaboration.

They went further than this, as a matter of fact, and the races mixed with a freedom that I noticed everywhere. From the point of view of social concord this is cause for rejoicing, while it must be left to time to correct any lowering of the intellectual standard. Every one knows that the principal feature of a slave-owning community is the absence of a middle class whose mission it must be to hold the balance in an oligarchy and prepare the way for the emancipation of the oppressed.

When the principle of democracy was proclaimed by the "big whites" of Brazil, they could rely for support only on the leading intellectuals of sound general education, and on the inorganic masses of the population formed or deformed morally by slavery and its attendant evils with an inchoate admixture supplied by immigration. This necessarily was the situation that had to be faced on the morrow of the decree of emancipation.

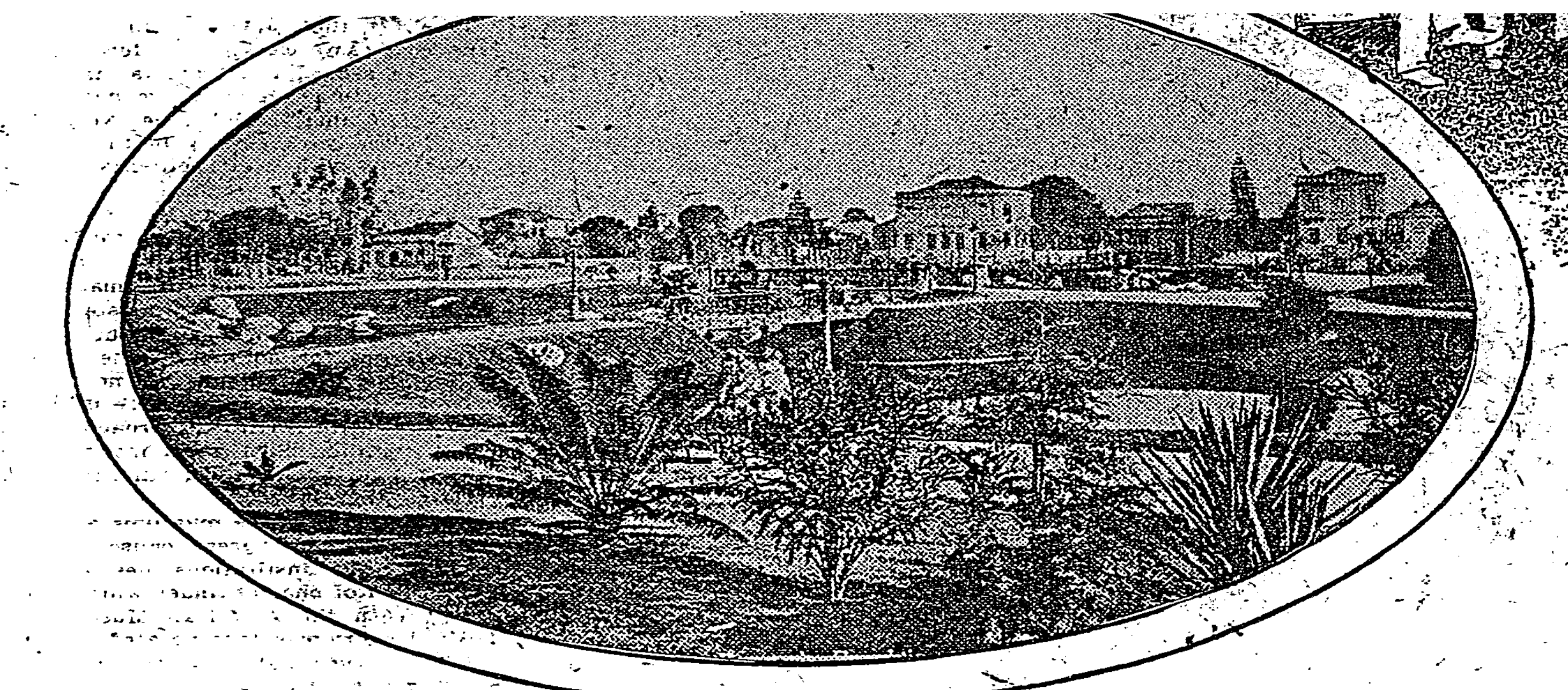
By degrees this state of affairs has been, and is still being, improved. The substratum of the community remains, however, such as I have painted it. I am aware, of course, that in the immense territory there are vast districts of different soil and climate where Indians and blacks are very unequally divided. For the purpose of this brief summary, I am naturally only taking into account representative centers of population. In some parts the negroes have deserted the plantations for the cities, where they are employed by the multiplicity of minor occupations, and their place has been taken by Italian colonists who have established themselves as small farmers. Elsewhere, the ex-slaves remained in their cabins and continued their accustomed tasks with more and less interest, depending on the life as they liked. They appear to work and live in perfect harmony with their former owners.

As regards the social "elite," it is less easy to pick out its general features here than it is in the Argentine, where on every hand there are visible points of comparison with the life as we know it. We are obliged to revert to our starting point, which is a feudal oligarchy, the center of culture and refinement, which by a voluntary act is in process of dissolution into a single heterogeneous mass, without any faring of the relations between different tiers of the empire preserved a nucleus of aristocracy, which, only, a vestige remains to-day. The danger now might well be submersion beneath an inferior intellectual element which lacks the powerful bias toward higher education peculiar to the ruling element which will prove the salvation of the country.

It is on his plantation (fazenda), in the center of his influence, that we must seek the planter (fazendeiro). Of a highly refined feudalism of principle, deeply imbued with European ways of thinking, and with the tastes of the aristocracy, he distinguished, at one time, our own eighteenth century, aristocracy, in its unselfishness and its destined probably to remain so of the first spasmodic movements of an evolving force whose pursuit of a new order involves initial confusion, but which, in the end, is either the product of tradition or the outcome of democratic casualty. He leads the broad and simple life of the large landowner in a land whose soil offers every inducement to try fresh experiments. As you will notice, even



A Bit of Railroad Scenery in Brazil.



The Jardin da Praça da Republic, St. Paul.

dences of his search for the beautiful and his thirst for knowledge. And everywhere, without, you will see the convincing proofs of his endless activity. In Paris one of these influential men may pass unnoticed, so little does he resemble his prototype as invented by satirists with his modesty of speech and simplicity of bearing. He would, however, reveal a closer study, and when he comes among us to obtain fresh force for his strenuous task, I should like to see some of our young men seize the opportunity to improve themselves while paying him the courtesy of a visit.

All these social forces have a natural tendency to form themselves into groups. But the Brazilian planter like other feudal survivals in Europe, is exposed to the attack of every modern commercial and industrial force that is tempted to wield some sort of social authority. This is now the case of all communities in Rio, in St. Paul, or in any other city of the world.

A reception on extremely Parisian lines given by Senator Azeredo, assisted by Mme. Azeredo, proved once again how strong is the likeness between circles that believe that in this exotically placed. A single telegram suffices to give uniformity to the toilettes of all the women in the world, and if those to be seen in Mme. Azeredo's salons were less extravagant than those in Paris are occasionally, Rio could not be being quite as eager as Paris in its pursuit of beauty's adornments.

Shall I mention that Brazilian women have large black eyes that are furiously inquisitive, usually pale complexions, with sometimes, golden-bronze reflections, that they are vivacious in speech and take a delight in conversational tourneys? The Senhores Pinheiro Machado and Guanabara were kind enough to give me an invitation that enabled me to see a little more of some of the politicians. Senhor Pinheiro Machado has a house that is built among the palm trees on a height that commands the whole of the bay. I confess that in this exotically placed place was more tempted to open my eyes than my ears; still, in spite of the counter-attractions of the lovely landscape, I managed to study the mysteries of Brazilian politics a little more closely, and, as I realize that the little for the union are and will remain predominant, providing that the question of personalities can be put where it belongs.

How shall I omit to speak of the ball given in commemoration of the independence of Chile, where I had the pleasure of meeting the flower of Rio society, together with the representatives of all the foreign powers? I should only give it a passing mention were it not that the President of the republic, who opened the ball in person, had conceived the idea of inviting me to form one of the official quadrille, with the idea of course of paying a compliment to my country.

When the excellent President of Rio announced this decree of public authority, I believed a catastrophe was imminent, and did not hesitate to impart my fears to his charming wife, who declared herself ready to go under fire by my side. The worst of it was that I had before me the mocking eyes of the Papal Nuncio, with whom I had just shaken hands, and I could see that he was far from wishing me success in the perilous career on which I was about to embark.

Timidly I broke it to my partner that it was over fifty years since I had danced a quadrille, and she returned my confidence by acknowledging that her education as regards the art of dancing had been totally neglected. The great fat man in pearls, whose ring was large enough to use to bolt an egg in, found our predicament really amusing. I saw myself about to become the scandal of Christendom, and I thought of my ignorance, my partner, and

I took up our positions and arranged to the activities of civilization by our country. Could anything be more encouraging than this disinterested acceptance of the testimony of history, considering how many there be who would exalt themselves by the animosity they expend in belittling France.

A very different atmosphere assuredly awaited me at the Bangs factories, where are admirable spinning and weaving mills; here the raw Brazilian cotton is transformed into those printed stuffs of vivid colorings in which the working classes love to drape themselves and the movement of the nobler demonstrations. Wherever the work of social evolution is being carried out, wherever there is seen a fine promise for the future, there it is a joy for the French to find the name of their country associated with the forward movement. The splendid industrial development of Bangs, among many other similar centres, shows what is being done in Brazil in this direction.

I have seen nothing more striking in Europe. The Brazilians possess in an equal degree with the Argentines the capacity of bringing to the highest possible perfection any work to which they set their hand. Had I but disposed of a longer time, the most superficial of visits to any part of the country, would, I was told, have furnished me with abundant proofs of this fact. But what I saw in my brief stay at St. Paul gave me all the evidence I could want of it.

I have already said that in Brazil our laws for the protection of industrial and agricultural laborers are unknown. Not but what politicians have studied the matter. But in the immense for centuries, it is difficult to see how such laws, if voted, could be effectually applied. All the more credit is therefore due to the large employers of Brazilian labor who have done their best to improve the material condition of their hands without waiting to be compelled to do so.

The working population of Bangs is scattered about the country in chalets that appear to be admirably sanitary, and all wear the aspect of the finest of physical and moral wellbeing. A large building has been provided for the purpose of kind and a theatre in which the hands may amuse themselves with theatricals and concerts. Unnecessary to state that we were received to the strains of the "Marseillaise," and that the French Republic was vigorously cheered.

I did not go so far as to say that there were no marks of servitude or of slavery to the picture, I have not concealed the fact that emigrants complain loudly of the want of supervision from which they suffered in some regions. It seems fair to infer from what has already been accomplished that more is being attempted. It is naturally the farmer on the fazendas who receives the most attention because he is the deep and almost inexhaustible source of the National wealth.

It would appear that there are no limits to the productivity of this soil, whose fertility has been developed and renewed by the action of sun and rain. Side by side with the barbarism of slavery, there has been a barbarous system applied to the land, from which much has been drawn while nothing was returned to it.

Now the question of the proportion between the harvest and the seedling has come prominently forward. There is still, however, much virgin land that awaits the farmer. The real problem of a national system of agriculture to be applied in Brazil will be left for a generation that we shall never know.

Meanwhile their finest forests are being cleared and the horizon with smoke. The progress of the Brazilian forests "deserve a volume, not a paragraph or chapter, and its writer should be both learned and a poet.

I did not visit the fairytale regions of the Amazon, but however amazing they may be, I think they could scarcely surpass the powerful impression made on me by the forests of St. Paul. There is a limit to our nervous receptivity, beyond which no sensations from outside can go. We in Europe have dwelt amid a beautiful harmony of the forces of nature which has molded all our impressions in certain forms of beauty, and to find fault with them would be sacrilege, since the highest inspirations of art have been drawn from this source. Thus, con- cern or not, we have lived in an equilibrium of pleasing emotions that imposes on us certain limitations of sensation to certain forms of the spectacle that nature provides.

Therefore, when we are suddenly confronted with an unknown nature whose power and vigor shatter all our preconceived notions and alter the whole focus of our organs, the only possible effect at first is one of complete bewilderment. We must then get used to the new order of sensations before we expose ourselves to another, and get back again to the standpoint of a corresponding sense of aesthetics.

I had to endure several headaches before I could rise to the level of the gentle forest, and descending into a valley that is shaded by the fresh and delicate foliage of banana trees, rising now to the top of a hill from which all the indentations of the great bay are plainly visible, and a small gulf hidden in an avalanche of rocks and boulders lies revealed, where the mysterious waters sub and vanish on a bed of flowers; ever onward the motor car pursues its headlong way at a speed one longs to check. Often we stop to prolong the pleasure of a moment, but if one did not take care one might stop forever.

The Botanical Gardens of Rio are famous the world over. The astounding forms of foliage, the bold growth of all- cient tree and young shoot, the ultimately dense profusion of every form of vegetable life recalling what must have been the earliest stage of the life of our planet, reduced me to a state of speechless surprise. I promised myself a second visit to its marvels, but never accomplished this, because of the even greater magic detained me elsewhere.

Bon Vista, the Emperor's country house, in a suburb of Rio, is surrounded by a fine park which is going to be turned into a public garden. The "Fluminenses" make frequent pilgrimages thither with their families to spend a day in the shade of its trees during the hot season. But, to tell the truth, while they in this way enjoy Europeanizing themselves in artificially made gardens, I took delight in drinking in the Americanization that awaits you in the outskirts of the young Corcovado forest, which seems to be advancing the height of the bay in order to draw from the sunshine a renewal of its vigor.

The high peak of the Corcovado (over 2,000 feet) that broods over the city, looms large in the horizon, and one can readily believe that the first thought of the invader was to climb to the height of the bay in order to draw from the sunshine a renewal of its vigor.

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bay, her islets, and a mass of mountains heaved one up, the other fell they are finally swallowed up in the sea.

A new world is here revealed to your gaze, a world in which the whole miracle of the earth's multiple aspects is epitomized, where the eternal play of light and shade constitutes an ever changing picture that creates a world drama in inanimate nature.

Are you surprised to meet some Parisians up here? No, not much. The first result of our industrial equipment is to diminish the proportions of the globe. It is easier to-day to go from one continent to another than it used to be to go from one village to the next. I am personally glad of this, for nothing could be better for us French people than to travel in foreign countries since in this way we get a standard of comparison that we badly need.

Coming down from the Corcovado stop at "Sivoreira" where a shady path out in the mountainside will bring you down to the city through a wilderness of wood, where a profusion of parasitic growth covers the boughs, tying them up in a mad confusion of tendrils.

Next after the Corcovado the "Tijuca" will attract you, and the former, ends in wondrous points of view. In this case the pleasure is in the getting there. Passing now through lines of tall bamboos whose light foliage meets overhead, now following the course of a noisy waterfall that surges amid the verdure of the forest, and descending into a valley that is shaded by the fresh and delicate foliage of banana trees, rising now to the top of a hill from which all the indentations of the great bay are plainly visible, and a small gulf hidden in an avalanche of rocks and boulders lies revealed, where the mysterious waters sub and vanish on a bed of flowers; ever onward the motor car pursues its headlong way at a speed one longs to check. Often we stop to prolong the pleasure of a moment, but if one did not take care one might stop forever.

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which, to circumvent, for the smallest formally one must take the train. Coming back in the evening is fatiguing. One goes to the hotel for the night. Your friends take possession of you, and while you are dawdling in Rio all your correspondence is lying unattended at Petropolis.

There is, in consequence, a strong feeling of being cut off from the world. The nearest Rio, near the Baron de Rio Branco, who somehow invariably manages to be at Rio when they are at Petropolis, and vice versa, just to upset our worthy "phenomenities." All this is not done without a certain expenditure of money. Budget Commissioners beware.

Petropolis is another beautiful town, three hours from Rio. On the opposite shore of the bay, a railway climbs or winds around the lower slopes, cutting its way through the forest as far as the rail at a vast plateau from whence there radiate a number of paths that invite you to wander among the surprises of the mountains. It is a superb spectacle. A "circus" of bare rocks bristles with pointed peaks, one of which, bearing some resemblance to the forefinger of a human hand, is known as "the Finger of God."

Whichever way you bend your steps this formidable and imperious finger lifts itself against the horizon, and the path of the planets through the heavens. The beauty of Petropolis lies in its madly bounding torrents, which leap the giant boulders heaped up in its course, ruthlessly destroying the green growth that make a daily struggle for life.

So fine that the giant strife makes an incomparable spectacle. I confess that the series of forest panoramas that open out on either side of the railway, from Rio Bay to Petropolis, made up for the magic charm of the day's excursion. Tall ferns raised against the sky, the transparent lacework of a light parasol, monstrous bamboos threw into the midst their long shoots shaped like green ladders, shrubs both slender and stout and of every kind of leafy growth encroach upon the heavy branches, worn out with the weight of parasites; the creepers twined like boas around their supports, flinging back the sun's rays in a million of trees a wealth of fine tendrils, reaching on reaching once again their native earth, will there take fresh root and draw renewed force for the future fight with fresh resistances, a single one of the family, with leaves like a young bamboo, so fine that the stark is welling in visible, entirely unobscured, in its frail yet stubborn network, forming it into a green arbor that would put to shame any to be found in our ancient and classic gardens—all these and many other aspects of the marvelous scene, the stark is welling in visible, entirely unobscured, in its frail yet stubborn network, forming 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SOCIAL CONDITIONS IN BRAZIL, AS SEEN BY CLEMENCEAU

(Continued from Page 8.)

furrowed with a sinister glow, boughs and branches lay heaped up on the ground in immense flaming piles through which the charred stumps of boles brought low by fire crashed noisily to earth, where their corpses lay and slowly smoldered to ashes on the morrow's coffee plantation, in accordance with the law of nature which builds fresh forms of life out of the decomposed elements of death.

At nightfall we entered the station of St. Paul, where the cheers of the students in loud acclaim of the French Republic made us a joyous welcome. A few minutes later we found ourselves at a banquet attended apparently by representatives of every country of the world, and Brazilians and Frenchmen here united to express their brotherly aspirations in words of lofty idealism.

The City of St. Paul (350,000 inhabitants) is so curiously French in some of its aspects and customs that for a whole week I had not once the feeling of being abroad. The feature of St. Paul is that French is the universal language.

St. Paul's society is supposed to be more markedly individual than any other community in the republic, and it offers this double phenomenon of being strongly imbued with the French spirit, and at the same time of having developed those personal traits that go to make up its determining characteristics. You may take it for granted that the Paulist is Paulist to the very marrow of his bones, Paulist in Brazil as well as in France or any other land, and then tell me if there was ever a man more French in courtesy, more nimble in conversation in his aristocratic guise, or more amiable in common intercourse than this Paulist business man at once so prudent and so daring, who has given to coffee a new valuation.

Talk a little while with Señor Antonio Prado, Prefect of St. Paul, and one of the leading citizens, whose mansion, set in the frame of a marvelous park of tropical vegetation, would be a thing of beauty in any country, and tell me whether such elegant simplicity of speech could imaginably express any but a French soul. The same might be said of his nephew, M. Arinos de Mello, of whom I have already spoken, a clever man of letters, who divides his life between the virgin forest and the boulevard, and who might easily be taken for a Parisian but for a soft creole accent. Frenchmen basking in Brazilian suns, or Brazilians drinking deep of Latin springs—what matter by which name we know them, so that their

Curious Local Features That Are Strongly Suggestive of French Influence.

pulses beat with the same fraternal blood?

The fact that the Paulist character has been strongly developed along lines of its own, and that the autonomy of Brazilian States permits of the fullest independence of productive energy within the limits of federal freedom, has led some to draw the hasty conclusion that there is a keen rivalry between the different provinces, and to see separatist tendencies where there exists nothing but a very legitimate ambition to forward a free evolution under the protection of confederated interests.

The States of St. Paul and Rio stand at the head of the confederation both by reason of their intellectual superiority and by their economic expansion, and the steady increase of their personal weight in the federation is naturally in proportion to the influence they have succeeded in acquiring in the exercise of their right to self-government.

As no one seeks to infringe any of their prerogatives, and as the only criticism one might make would be that certain States are at present unfit to fulfill all the duties of government, while any attempt at separation must tend to weaken each and all, no serious party either at St. Paul or Rio, or indeed in any other province, would consent to even discuss the eventuality of a slackening of the federal tie. The Paulists are and will ever remain Paulists, but Brazilian Paulists.

My first visit was paid to the head of the Government of St. Paul, who extended to me the most generous hospitality. Señor Albuquerque Lins, President of the State, received me in the presence of his Ministers, Señor Olavo, Egydio de Souza, Minister of Finance; Señor Carlos Guimarães, Minister of the Interior; Señor Washington Luis, Minister of War, and Señor Jorge Tibirica, who had just vacated the Presidential chair and was one of the most distinguished statesmen of St. Paul. Señor Augusto Ramos, one of the authors of the valorisation, and our Vice Consul, M. Delage, whose tact, intelligence and wide understanding of his duties are above all praise, were also present on the occasion.

The President, who had an exaggerated opinion of the defects of his French, managed to convey to me in excellently worded phrases his warm sympathy for France, which indeed he proved by the cordial reception he gave us. I in my turn assured him of the warmly fraternal

sentiments of France for Brazil and Brazilian interests in general, he also for St. Paul and Paulist society in particular.

And then, as though to prove that our compliments were not merely demanded by etiquette, the conversation turned upon matters in which St. Paul and France were so mixed that the Paulist seemed to take as much pleasure in acclaiming France as did the Frenchman in expressing his admiration for the stupendous work carried out by the Paulists with such giddy rapidity in developing a modern state that founds its hopes for the future on the miracles accomplished in the past.

It was a joy to me to run about the city haphazard. You do not ask from St. Paul the stage setting furnished by Rio. Yet there is no lack of the picturesque. The suburb of St. Paul, where costly

villas make bright spots of color in the gorgeously beflowered gardens, can offer some fine points of view. At the end of an esplanade bordered with trees, the plateau suddenly falls away into a gentle valley, which would seem admirably designed for the site of a park worthy the ambitions of St. Paul if the authorities would but set about it while the price of land is still moderate; the only public garden at present owned by the town is a pretty promenade that can scarcely be considered as more than a pleasant witness to a modest past.

In the course of our walk we came upon the museum, which stands on the hill from which the independence of Brazil was proclaimed. It contains fine zoological, botanical, and paleontological collections. I was shown moths of more than 30 centimeters in breadth of wing, and humming birds considerably smaller than cockchafers. I paused for an instant before the cases containing relics of prehistoric America, with utensils, ornaments, and barbaric dresses of the aboriginal Indians, who to-day are sadly travestied in bits of breeches and remnants of hard felt hats.

There was no time to visit the Schools to whose improvement the Paulist Government attaches high importance. I promised, however, to call at the Training College, and indeed could scarcely have done less, since this marvelous institution would be a model in any country of Europe.

I can but regret that I am unable to lead the reader through the building to see it in all its details, its rooms for study, its gardens, its workshops. The young Head Master Señor Ruy de Paula Souza, who was a pupil at our Auteuil College, does his professors the greatest credit and does not conceal his ambition to outdo them. A much too flattering reception was given me, in the course of which I had the surprise of hearing quotations from some of my own writings introduced into a speech made by one of the professors. France and French culture received a hearty ovation!

The warmth of the welcome given me at St. Paul could only be outdone by Rio. The charm of a hearty expansion of fraternal feeling was added to the cordiality of the demonstrations in honor of our country. The pleasure felt when members of the same family meet after separation, and find their mutual affection

has been generously developed in the course of a life's experience; this was the impression made on me by the greeting of the students both at the Training College and at the Law Schools, where one of the young men delivered a speech in excellent French that formed the best of introductions to the lecture that followed.

In the evening the same young men organized a torchlight procession. I stood at a window with a French officer on either side of me. A moving speech was made to me by a student who stood on the balcony of the house opposite. The procession passed by to the strains of the "Marsellaise," amid a tumult of hurrahs in honor of France.

I mentioned two French officers. There is here now a French Military Mission, to whom has been intrusted the training of the police force, whose duty it will be to insure order in the State of St. Paul. Col. Balagny, who is in command, was away on furlough. Lieut. Col. Gattelet, who takes his place, is a highly deserving soldier, who appears to combine strict discipline with the pleasant urbanity of the French.

I observed with satisfaction that the mission was very popular at St. Paul. When the march of the Sambre-et-Meuse rang out, a crowd assembled to watch the passing of the troops, of which they are intensely proud and which they take a delight in cheering, with their French officers marching at their head. I was able to be present at a fine review held on the field of manoeuvres at Varzea de Corma. The soldier of St. Paul would figure creditably at Longchamp, for in precision and regularity of movement he can stand any comparison. I must add that the Brazilian officers who second the efforts of the mission are actuated by a zeal that merits a large share of the credit of the results.

When I congratulated Col. Gattelet, I felt I ought to inquire whether he had been obliged to have frequent recourse to punishment in order to bring the men to the point at which I saw them.

"Punishment?" he said. "I have never had to administer any. I have no right, for one thing, and if I wanted to punish I should have to ask the permission of the Minister of War. But I have never had occasion to even think of such a thing, for all my men are as docile as they are alert and good tempered."

I could only admire. It is true we were discussing a select troop which enjoys not only special pecuniary advantages, but quarters, called by the vulgar name of barracks but which for convenience, hygiene, and comfort far surpass anything that our wretched budgets ever allow us to offer to the French recruit.